DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 022 627 RE 001 292

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Pub Date Apr 68
Note- 22p.; Paper presented at College Reading Association Conference, Knoxville, Tenn., April 1968.
EDRS Price MF- $0.25 HC- $0.96
Descriptors- AUTOINSTRUCTIONAL METHODS, *BEGINNING READING, COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION, EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION, READING CONSULTANTS, *READING PROGRAMS, READING TESTS, *TEACHER EDUCATION, TEACHER SELECTION, *TEACHING QUALITY

A brief review of the research leads to the conclusion that children learn to read equally well with very different teaching methods and that the truly important factor in creating good or poor reading achievement is the quality of the teacher. Recommendations for preservice, inservice, and graduate training of teachers are given. The great influx of new instructional materials and gadgets can help to revitalize the curriculum and bring about exciting changes in pupil interest and attitudes. However, procedures must be implemented for studying and evaluating these innovations according to predetermined professional standards. New instructional materials, educational television, and computer assisted instruction will allow more attention to be given to individual differences among children. References are given. (RJ)

College Reading Association
Knoxville, Apr. 1968

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WHAT LIES AHEAD in PRIMARY READING?

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Contrary to Learning to Read: The Great Debate,[1] primary reading programs of the next decade will not revert entirely to a synthetic-phonics or code-emphasis approach. Already, however, several school systems and various reading reform groups are implementing Jeanne Chall's major recommendation. It is also true that some authors and publishers are hard at work developing coding exercises for beginning and older pupils. To many readers of The Great Debate these actions may appear logical. In their search for panaceas, uncritical readers will ignore the qualifications which accompany Chall's primary conclusion, and without these qualifications these same individuals will form hasty, inappropriate judgments.

Obviously, changes to improve initial reading instruction are both needed and inevitable. Leading educators have never been content to maintain the status quo; they are continually seeking more effective approaches to each area of the curriculum. In reading, the momentum for change has accelerated during the past ten years. Today's teaching methodology and materials, as well as teacher education programs, reflect some of the directions that primary reading instruction can be expected to take in the

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immediate future.

Methodology

Currently, there are more programs and systems available for beginning reading than for any other reading level or for any other area of the curriculum. The present decade has brought us i/t/a, the language experience approach, Words in' Color, more than thirty phonics innovations, various linguistics programs, O.K. Moore's responsive environment, a new focus upon individualized reading, a revival of the Montessori method, programed learning, and countless basal readers. Even though each new program has staunch supporters, research evidence to demonstrate the superiority of a single, specific approach is notably absent. Morecver, an interesting phenomenon has been evident during the past century. Perhaps this is best illustrated by reference to an early experiment in Boston and to similar results during more recent times.

William B. Gillooly[2], a school psychologist, studied the annual reports of the School Committee of the City of Boston for the years 1872-76. He found that Boston used a "Pronouncing Orthography", a fairly phonically regular type, in which it had some beginning readers printed. A first wave of enthusiasm for the use of the new Orthography in a few pilot situations led to its gradual acceptance throughout the city, but within five years

the approach was discontinued. Apparently, when all teachers of beginning reading employed the new method, it lost its aura of distinction and reading achievement scores were no better than those obtained by a traditional orthography.

The novelty effect of any new approach was examined by Chall who stated:

> ... during the period when systematic phonics was the "in" method according to Nila Smith, the authors of two of the three studies concluded that the innovative method, look-say, was better.
>
> When look-say was the accepted method (from 1920 to 1935), in theory at least, all the studies concluded for phonics -- twice as many for systematic as for intrinsic phonics. But while systematic phonics may have been the "out" method then, albeit only in theory, it had probably not yet been "out" long enough to be innovative again and to bring with it the novelty effects of new methods.
>
> Between the period of the debate (1955 to 1965), and when intrinsic phonics was still the dominant approach (and systematic phonics old enough to be innovative again), there seems to have been a real buildup of conclusions for systematic phonics.[3]

History, indeed, repeats itself, and children appear to have continued to learn to read as well as before, despite this "in again, out again, Finnigan, game" we've played with them.

As you know, Jeanne Chall's thesis is that the best beginning reading results are achieved by using a code-emphasis method (i/t/a, linguistics, or phonics). How she arrived at this conclusion on the basis of an analysis of nine studies which compared a sight-word with a phonics-first approach, may well be the mystery of the present decade, particularly since the recommendation followed her dramatic denunciation of these same studies as "shockingly inconclusive" ! ~~Is it possible that she could have based her central theme upon the results of such limited evidence?~~

Actually Chall's analysis of reading research between 1912-1962 was completed before the results of the USOE studies became available, although she devoted a brief section of Learning to Read to an initial report of the 27 projects which represented the largest coordinated effort ever attempted in the area of reading methodology. More recently, an entire issue of The Reading Research Quarterly (Summer, 1967)[4] has focused upon the first year findings of the Cooperative Research Program. A summarizing statement follows:

> The analysis of methodology indicated that the various non-basal instructional programs tended to

> be superior to basal programs as measured by word recognition skills of pupils after one year of reading instruction. Differences between basal and non-basal programs were less consistent when measures of comprehension, spelling, rate of accuracy of reading, and word study skills constituted the criterion of reading achievement.[5]

Now, as reports are forthcoming from the second and third year follow-up studies of children who participated in this broad-scale cooperative research, the evidence continues to accumulate that there is no single, best way to teach beginning reading. Instead, children learn to read equally well with very different teaching methods. The truly important factor in creating good or poor reading achievement is the quality of the teacher. Fry's three-year project publication, for example, indicated that the effect of a good first-grade teacher can still be seen at end of the third grade. The correlation of .59 at the close of the second year is surprisingly high, while the correlation at the end of the third year, though a somewhat lower .21, showed that teacher influence was still in effect.[6] This finding reaffirms a belief which most of us hold, namely, that we should have excellent teachers in first grade.

Since there is no single, best approach to reading, a number

of schools in the future will permit effective teachers to exercise greater choice of reading methodology, as illustrated by the request of an elementary school principal from the inner-city schools of Cleveland. He asked Case-Reserve to conduct a summer session for his teachers, kindergarten through grade 6, developing three or four approaches in depth. At some point during the workshop, each teacher will commit himself to the method which he wants to try with his pupils next year. This administrator recognizes that enthusiastic, well-prepared teachers are requisite to the reading growth of children.

Many educators agree that it is long past time for discarding the debate about whether Method A is better than Method B as an instructional vehicle for all teachers and for all pupils. We must move from debate to action as we seek to clarify and redefine goals for beginning reading instruction. Or, as Gray stated in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research (1960)[7], the issue is not which method is better but rather what the contribution of each method is. The ideal, of course, seems to be to seek a combination of methods and materials for use in providing better reading programs while also giving teachers freedom to take individual differences into account.

A county school system in Ohio is already attempting to determine how two programs, a basic phonics and a basal reading series, can be used together effectively to teach essential reading

skills and to develop interest in reading. This system will examine the effect that timing, emphasis, and unique characteristics of each approach has upon first-grade children throughout its rural area. I believe that other systems will try other combinations of methods, thus moving completely away from the idea that a single method benefits all children.

Other possible directions for primary reading instruction include the following:

(1) A study of cultural diversifications as a variable in the selection of reading techniques and materials should be undertaken.

(2) In the near future, many public nursery schools will be provided for three-and-four-year-olds. Under these conditions some children will be ready for reading earlier than at the present time. Certainly, new concepts of reading readiness will evolve, thus necessitating changes at the primary levels.

(3) Increasingly, there will be greater individualization of instruction, not just according to levels of ability but according to varying styles of learning.

(4) Diagnostic teaching or instructional feedback will become more prominent in the future. As a result, learning disabilities can be prevented entirely or at least receive earlier corrective measures.

(5) The role of the computer as an assistant in the development

of ability will be recognized more fully. It can aid in the development of ability in phonics, in the development of advanced strategies of word analysis, and in the development of understanding of printed discourse. Having utilized the computer for these purposes, however, schools should promote even more vigorously than in the past, the notion that pupils must read extensively on their own. Independent reading should become a major objective, because it is the ultimate goal, per se.

A word of caution: with all the flurry over new approaches to beginning reading, a truism is necessary. Dozens of linguistic readers, for example, can be published, but unless a reading program is teachable, it is chaff and not wheat, no matter what label is stamped on its package. To be valuable, a program must be an effective instrument in the hands of a confident and competent teacher. Therefore, it has to have basically sound content, linguistically and psychologically, clear procedures for children, and practice material that leads to the achievement of the goals inherent in the philosophy, psychology, and methodology of the program. This kind of analysis of all programs may help in evaluating their appropriateness for the classroom.

Instructional Materials

A tour of the exhibit hall adjoining any major reading conference confirms the now accepted reality that a gadget-materials explosion is upon us. Unlike other explosions, however, too many people have become eager, insistent sacrificial lambs. Sometimes our own naivete has resulted in the spending of huge federal sums for fraudulent wares or for programed-failure-producing materials. At other times, our good advice has fallen upon the deaf ears of those who control the purse-strings, and despite our outraged cries these individuals have embarked upon a purchasing binge. It is entirely possible that when the educational history of this decade is revealed to those living in the 21st century we will be designated as the victims of the most scandalous swindle ever perpetrated in the guise of instant reading reform! For this reason alone, among others, IRA delegates to the Tenth Annual Convention adopted a "Buyer Be Wary" resolution:

> 1. Statements of possible benefits from reading improvement services should be characterized by modesty and due caution for the limits of professional skills, which do not encompass cure-all powers.
>
> 2. The possible causes of inadequate or poor reading skills are many. There is no single

> treatment or approach known which will effectively correct all possible causes of difficulty.
>
> 3. No ethical person who is a professional in the area of reading improvement can or should guarantee marked improvement of skills for all users of his services.
>
> 4. Distributors of reading devices or materials have an ethical obligation to submit their products to fair scientific trials before marketing, and to make the data of these evaluations available to all prospective purchasers.[8]

Hopefully, these cautions will be observed throughout the current technological revolution.

Unlike typical explosions, the present-day situation can be directed toward constructive results. New materials and equipment in the classroom can help to revitalize the curriculum; they can bring about exciting changes in pupil interests and attitudes. But these benefits will be forthcoming only in those schools which adopt procedures for keeping on top of the rising tide of materials for beginning readers and for evaluating all teaching-learning innovations according to pre-determined professional standards. In systems where such practices are in effect, wise decisions are being reached and public monies are being expended to the advantage of both pupils and teachers. In one district, for example, where

none of the following had been available previously, dictionaries were purchased for the primary levels, quantities of trade books were added to satisfy a wide range of abilities and interests, some tape recorders, listening center units, and primer typewriters were furnished, and a number of television sets were purchased for use on a shared basis by primary classrooms in that district. The appropriate use of new materials and electronic devices can be expected to whet children's intellectual appetites and to augment their learning.

On the other hand, in schools where there are no established guidelines, wasteful expenditures probably will continue to be the major course of action. One county proudly announced the purchase of $3,000 of machines and books for each newly formed reading center room. These items were placed in the hands of relatively inexperienced young teachers who became so frustrated by not knowing what to do with them that several ignored the new equipment entirely and proceeded to teach corrective reading groups from familiar basal series. Another system spent $20,000 on machines when it lacked text and trade materials in its classrooms and had no elementary school libraries. When asked about his purchase, an administrator retorted defensively: "The money had to be spent! At least we <u>have</u> the machines."

In an era when educators generally are attempting to give more than lip-service to individual differences among children, many

schools are re-examining their present procedures and materials. Based upon the findings of the recently completed Western Reserve University study of ESEA Title I Reading Programs throughout the U.S. during 1966-67, I can state positively that a major impact of Title I may be felt through the use of instructional materials to meet the reading needs of economically deprived pupils. There was general agreement that aids from basal readers to computer-assisted programs are essential, but few agreed either on which of a long list were most essential or on how they were to be used. Despite diverse views on this matter, however, there was unanimous concurrence that teachers must be instructed in the appropriate use of instructional tools. They must be given supervised practice periods until they gain confidence and skill in handling equipment whether they are working with a relatively simple filmstrip projector or one of the more complex pieces of electronic hardware.

Within the 60's we have witnessed the advent of computers which use programed reading materials for self-instructional purposes at all levels from the beginning years through high school. Undoubtedly,in the immediate future, these computers and other devices will incorporate instant feedback systems which may be programed so as to be developmental rather than informational. We have also seen the development of educational T.V. It is safe to predict the widespread use of T.V. as a medium of teaching

reading in schools and homes by 1980. Inevitably, the increasing influence of private industry on educational technology and methodology will result in an avalanche of both software and hardware for our classrooms. There is already the distinct possibility that use will be made of a full-sized T.V. screen of some 5 x 5 feet which can operate from capsules, instamatic fashion, and which will be heard by children through individual receivers according to their needs.

There will be significant changes in testing and evaluation techniques. Traditional tests of mental maturity have given false results for disadvantaged youth. One system (Mt. Vernon, New York) has designed a new technique for assessing the intellectual ability of the culturally disadvantaged. Based on the theory that a relationship exists between intelligence and the rate of speed with which brain waves respond to a stimulus, the new technique measures the way the child's brain responds to a flash of light. Whether this test will be valuable, cannot be predicted. We can expect, however, that growing concern about culture-free tests will stimulate much activity in this area during the next decade.

The great variety of auto-instructional programs will call for different techniques for evaluating their usefulness. Ideally, too, the measurement of achievement will be more in harmony with individual learning patterns. We shall require evaluative instruments to determine the effectiveness of dif-

ferential treatments according to learning styles of pupils. New yardsticks and new terminology will be needed to supersede the "grade level" types of evaluation we now do.

All in all, priority should be given in the near future to a conference which devotes a considerable portion of time to the use of technology in reading instruction.

Teacher Education

The new Education Professions Development Act (EPDA), passed on June 29, 1967, may well be the single most important legislation to date for ending critical shortages of teachers throughout the nation. Indeed, projections have been made that by 1974 the supply of teachers will actually exceed the demand. Quantity does not beget quality, of course, and all schools need more effective teachers at all levels. This situation is especially true in the early school years. In the past, some school systems attempted to place better, experienced teachers with young children. Other systems appear to have operated on the premise that children will be with them for several years and if shortchanged during the primary grades the quality of instruction will be balanced during the later years.

As for predictions in the area of teacher education, it is crystal clear that we must evaluate and restructure our teacher preparation programs, both at the preservice and in-service levels.

If, as it seems likely, priority will be placed on improving instruction in reading in the primary grades during the next few years, hundreds of additional primary reading teachers and primary reading specialists will be needed. The preparation of both groups will require innovative changes in teacher-education programs. Ideally, only potential career teachers should be eligible for the training involved. Several universities have extended teacher preparation from four to five years, while those which offer reading specialization are moving from a five-year to a six-year program. These intensive programs are not designed for that portion of the 200,000 new graduates who teach for three years or less (about one-third). The expense and depth of such special programs make them inappropriate for those who will be temporary teachers only.

Preservice

Collegiate preparation in education has been lamentably weak in the past. Fortunately, more and more institutions are revising their programs so that every prospective teacher will receive a broad foundation in liberal arts and sciences. Following a period of two and a half to three years of strong undergraduate education, the teacher-to-be then undertakes intensive preparation which leads to a thorough understanding of psychological and pedagogical theories of instruction. Most importantly, he also participates

in a public school internship of sufficient depth to enable him to succeed on the job.

Because excellent career teachers are needed, more effective screening of candidates must take place. Initial screening should be conducted by faculty members of the department of education who utilize admissions criteria above and beyond those established for entrance to the college as a whole. As a second screening, more institutions than formerly are considering the results of an exploratory teaching period during the junior year. Not only does the exploratory experience with its emphasis upon instructional skills enable college personnel to appraise student potential, but it helps each student reach a decision about teaching as a career.

During a fourth year, those candidates who express strong commitment and who receive high ratings can continue with professional courses and advanced work in such adjunct areas as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.. They would also study thoroughly two or three children in a school setting to learn as much as possible about them socially, intellectually, and psychologically. The fifth year of the preservice then could be devoted to an 18-week paid internship in a classroom supervised by a master teacher and a second paid internship of equal length in a school reading center with a reading specialist. Because the focus throughout the fifth year would be on learning by means

of examined experiences, there would be opportunities for community study in which the prospective teacher could observe and participate in activities of community life,in impoverished areas, as well as others. School and community involvement would be possible through neighborhood committees and community organizations and during PTA, school board, curriculum, and teachers' meetings. Planned experiences as assistant teacher, tutor, or recreational leader, possibly in conjunction with the Jobs Corps, could serve to broaden backgrounds also. In addition, bi-monthly seminar meetings with fellow interns, college and public school personnel, followed by group appraisals could foster valuable insights.

Graduate Training

For experienced career-teachers who wish to become primary reading specialists, programs should be offered by several universities. Those teachers who have completed requirements for a B.A. or B.S. degree could enroll in a fifth year of professional study and directed observations in classrooms and reading centers, similar to the program described above. Such training could be followed by a second year devoted to field experiences and a supervised paid residency in which the neophyte assumes responsibility for work with teachers and children in a designated school building. Through individual conferences and seminars, the sixth

year resident would continue to grow. Participation in the planning and conduct of a primary grade's reading evaluation could be an essential part of the program. Assuming that teacher interviews will be included among the survey procedures, beginning reading specialists would become more perceptive of primary teachers' major problems in the teaching of reading. Independent study and discussion with other "interns" should help specialists to alleviate teaching-learning problems. A semester of actual residence as a primary school reading consultant with supervision by the college staff and public school reading people, accompanied by a weekly seminar, could round out the sixth-year schedule.

As we examine the projected role of the teacher of reading in the 70's and 80's we are forced to recognize that there will be many children who may not succeed through the self-teaching programs to which I have referred. This means, then, that a teacher must be both a skilled diagnostician and a competent remedial instructor who can deal with a variety of types of disability. In most instances his teaching and evaluation will probably be synonymous (perhaps better named "diagnostic teaching"). Where they must be considered separately, evaluation will precede rather than follow instruction.

The reading teacher of the future may well need to become a skilled mechanic in working with computers and other types of hardware, perhaps being able to repair minor breakdowns. He will

need to understand data processing procedures in order to transmit very quickly to teachers such information as tests reveal about their pupils. He may also be in the best position to evaluate "input" as well as "output" in evaluating a primary reading program. In any event, he must keep abreast of new materials and techniques by taking a computer course, either during his preparatory period, or while he is on-the-job. The reading teacher and reading specialist of the future must be increasingly creative in the preparation of learning materials for individuals or small groups. These materials may need to be designed for use in a computerized program. Perhaps, first and foremost, the teacher must be well trained in guidance techniques and the humanities in order to combat the dehumanizing produced by this projected "machine state".

If we emphasize only the teaching process and the imparting of knowledge throughout our teacher education programs, we can fail -- and fail miserably -- despite indications that "the program has been an eminent success". A focus upon teaching procedures and the dissemination of information makes sense only in an unchanging environment, according to Carl Rogers. Because we are living in a time of dramatic change, we must place greater emphasis upon the conditions which facilitate learning -- in other words upon helping teachers understand how, why, and when the child learns, and how learning seems and feels to the child from the inside. One of the most important conditions, obviously,

is the quality of the inter-personal relationships between facilitator and learner.

Arthur Combs points out that the problem of learning always involves two aspects: providing new information or experience and helping the learner discover the meaning of information for himself. In the past, we have been so pre-occupied by the provision of information that we have actually fostered human problems through our failure to help students develop personal meanings. Somehow, through our own commitment to the humanization of education, we must make certain that teachers gain personal meanings, as well as facts, from their training so that they in turn will impart these attitudes to their pupils and to their colleagues. Teachers generally, and reading specialists particularly, need to become more concerned about the person involved in the process of learning, if they are to experience any degree of success in facilitating the discovery of the personal significance of reading as a life-long activity.

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